

Open Space Preservation Committee
Tuesday, September 20, 2016
Minutes
Mansfield Town Hall, Conference Room B
7:00p.m.

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm.

2. Attendance

Members present: Jim Morrow (chair), Ken Feathers, Quentin Kessel, Vicky Wetherell, Michael Soares, and Jennifer Kaufman (staff)

3. Opportunity for public comment

No members of the public were present.

4. Review of Minutes

Minutes of the August 2016 meeting were approved (Kessel, Soares).

5. New Business

- PZC referral – Mountain View Acres (9-lot subdivision, PZC file #1343)
See the OSPC's attached memo of Sept 20, 2016 to PZC and Town Planner Linda Painter regarding this application.

6. Continuing Business

- Permanent Preservation Memo to the Town Council
A memo was drafted to Town Council and Town Manager Matthew Hart and will be finalized at the next meeting. The memo discusses the lack of permanent preservation for the majority of Town-owned land, which was acquired as open space and so understood to be permanently preserved as such, and recommends options to the Town on how to proceed.

7. Executive Session

The committee voted to go into Executive Session at 8:30 and to come out of Executive Session at 8:41.

8. Communications

Minutes

- Conservation Commission: 8/17/16
- PZC: 9/6/16
- IWA: 9/6/16

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48.

DRAFT

To PZC, Linda Painter
From Open Space Preservation Committee
Re Mt. View Acres Conservation Subdivision Proposal
Date September 20, 2016

The Open Space Preservation Committee (OSPC) reviewed the proposed conservation subdivision at their September 20 meeting. The following comments address the proposed conservation subdivision plan, the open space dedications and other issues. The OSPC supports the proposal for a conservation subdivision, but some elements of the plan are not in agreement with the concepts of this type of development.

Proposed lots and driveways

The purpose of a conservation subdivision is to preserve the property's natural features. The current plan proposes development of a large wooded area at the rear of the property on Lot 1 rather than including it in a cluster of houses. An appropriate conservation subdivision would keep all building envelopes close together. To accomplish this, smaller lots could be created for Lots 2 and 3 to allow the building envelope for Lot 1 to be located on Coventry Road. Moving the Lot 1 building envelope would avoid placing a driveway across 150 feet of wetlands and maintain the natural wooded area in the rear corner. Lots 1, 2 and 3 could possibly be located on a shared semi-circular driveway to reduce the number of driveway cuts. The Mulwood East development on Wormwood Hill Road is an example of this design. A conservation easement on the wooded area between this driveway and Coventry Road would provide a continuation of the proposed buffer elsewhere along the road.

The committee supports the use of shared driveways within a cluster of houses, but not to develop natural areas on rear land. Thus, the committee does not support the use of a shared driveway for Lot 1 in its current location as a rear lot. Elsewhere in the subdivision, the committee supports a waiver to allow four houses on a shared driveway (Lots 4, 5, 6, and 7) to reduce driveway cuts on Coventry Road. The committee appreciates the proposed cul-de-sac design for Lots 4, 5, 6, and 7, which would create a neighborhood community rather than isolated homes.

Conservation easement areas

The committee supports the proposed conservation easement areas along Coventry Road, which would preserve the natural frontage on the west side of this road (the entire frontage across the road is preserved farm and forest land) and provide a buffer for agricultural operations across the road. A wider buffer area would be more useful if it is possible to increase the width of the conservation easements along the road.

The committee accepts the proposed conservation easements that would serve as buffer areas along the side and rear frontages, but we note that these interior easements would be difficult to monitor and enforce. All conservation easements should be placed on the lots' deeds to insure that they can be enforced. The Town's current easement language needs to be revised to allow management of invasive species in easement areas.

Open space dedication

The committee supports the proposed 2.4-acre open space dedication to the Town at the corner of Coventry and Browns Roads. This would be a "neighborhood" park that would offer scenic farmland views as a complement to the popular walking route along Coventry Road. This open space is close to the existing house on Lot 8. The committee recommends a fence between the park and Lot 8 to clearly mark the boundary between Town and private property. This would prevent private use of Town land and public trespass on Lot 8. An existing shed on the proposed open space should be removed before the Town accepts this land.